

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 SS-20 ISO-00 NSC-07 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SNM-02 DEA-05 PRS-01 L-03 AGR-20 AID-20

OMB-01 SP-03 NEA-14 H-03 /136 R

66610

DRAFTED BY EUR/TUR:RSDILLON

APPROVED BY: EUR/TUR:RSDILLON

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P 172014Z JUN 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 128835

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (DELETION OF CAPTION AND CHANGE OF
CLASSIFICATION TO UNCLASSIFIED)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, TU

SUBJECT: OPIUM BAN: REUTER'S STORY

1. FOLLOWING APPEARED HERE ON REUTER'S JUNE 17 TICKER:

2. QUOTE OPIUM (NEWSFEATURE -- IMMEDIATE) BY OZGEN ACAR
ANKARA, JUNE 17, REUTER -- THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT HAS ONLY
A FEW WEEKS TO FULFILL ITS ELECTION PLEDGE TO LIFT THE
AMERICAN-SPONSORED BAN ON OPIUM POPPY CULTIVATION.

AS DECISION DAY NEARS - UNDER PRESENT LAW A DECREE TO
RESUME POPPY FARMING MUST BE ISSUED IN JUNE - U.S. DIPLOMATS
ARE LAUNCHING A LAST-DITCH EFFORT TO SAVE THE BAN.

SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER IS EXPECTED TO VISIT
ANKARA WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS.

AMERICAN SOURCES HERE SAY DATES FOR THE TRIP WILL PROBABLY
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BE ARRANGED WITH TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTER TURAN GUNES DURING

THE NATO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE IN OTTOWA THIS WEEK.

THE UNITED STATES SPENT ABOUT 15 MILLION DOLLARS SECURING THE BAN, WHICH TOOK EFFECT IN 1972, CUTTING OFF THE MAJOR SOURCE OF HEROIN SOLD TO AMERICAN ADDICTS.

BUT THE LEVEL OF COMPENSATION HAS FAILED TO CONVERT THE 100,000 FORMER POPPY FARMERS TO THE U.S. CAUSE AND THE PRESSURE ON THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT TO SCRAP THE BAN HAS BEEN INTENSE.

IT HAS NOW BECOME AN EMOTIONAL TEST OF TURKISH INDEPENDENCE. WARNINGS OF CUTS IN AMERICAN AID HAVE ONLY HARDENED THE GENERAL OPINION HERE IN FAVOR OF A RESUMPTION OF POPPY CULTIVATION.

SOME FARMERS HAVE ALREADY JUMPED THE GUN AND PLANTED NEW CROPS.

DURING THE PAST WEEK, POLICE UNITS HAVE BURNT DOWN POPPY FIELDS IN FOUR DIFFERENT VILLAGES AND 64 FARMERS HAVE BEEN ACCUSED OF DEFYING THE BAN.

MOST OF THOSE ARRESTED SAID THEY PLANTED NEW CROPS BECAUSE THEY WERE CERTAIN THE GOVERNMENT IS TO END THE MEASURE THIS MONTH.

BEFORE 1972 CULTIVATION WAS PERMITTED IN FAVOR OF TURKEY'S 67 PROVINCES AND AN ESTIMATED ONE-THIRD OF THE CROP WAS ILLEGALLY SOLD TO SMUGGLERS. THE REST WAS BOUGHT BY THE STATE TO BE REFINED INTO MORPHINE AND CODEIN FOR MEDICINAL PURPOSES.

EARLIER THIS YEAR A COMMITTEE SET UP BY THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLES PARTY (RPP), SENIOR PARTNERS IN THE COALITION GOVERNMENT, RECOMMENDED POPPY FARMING RESUME IN THE SAME AREA OF SOUTHWEST ANATOLIA UNDER STRICT SECURITY CONTROLS.

TURKISH AND AMERICAN NARCOTICS AGENTS HERE ARE EXTREMELY SKEPTICAL OVER WHETHER IT IS POSSIBLE TO DEVISE CONTROLS
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THAT WILL STOP FARMERS SELLING TO SMUGGLING RINGS.

AT PRESENT THERE ARE NO TANGIBLE SIGNS THAT THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT WILL CHANGE ITS DECISION IN PRINCIPLE TO END THE BAN THOUGH IT HAS KEPT TOTAL SILENCE ON THE QUESTION IN RECENT WEEKS.

OFFICIALS ON BOTH SIDES ACKNOWLEDGE THAT A RESUMPTION OF

POPPY FARMING WILL DAMAGE TURCO-U.S. RELATIONS. THE LIFTING OF THE BAN WOULD ALSO HARM AMERICAN EFFORTS TO PERSUADE OTHER COUNTRIES TO STOP POPPY CULTIVATION.

"CONGRESS WILL NOT LIKE IT ONE BIT. THERE ARE SURE TO BE DEMANDS TO PRUNE AID TO TURKEY," ONE U.S. DIPLOMAT SAID.

BUT MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE IT IS NOW DIFFICULT FOR THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT TO GO BACK ON ITS ELECTION PLEDGE TO THE FARMERS.

"IT IS GOING TO NEED ALL DR KISSINGER'S ABILITY AND DIPLOMACY TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THIS," ONE FOREIGN OBSERVER SAID. REUTER 2148. END QUOTE. SISCO

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: OPIUM, HEROIN, PRESS COMMENTS, MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, AGRICULTURAL CONTROLS, MINISTERIAL VISITS, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 JUN 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: WorrelSW
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE128835
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: RSDILLON
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740157-0813, D740158-1123
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740638/aaaabgqs.tel
Line Count: 130
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: UNCLASSIFIED; CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: WorrelSW
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 27 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 AUG 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <19 FEB 2003 by WorrelSW>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OPIUM BAN: REUTER'S STORY
TAGS: SNAR, TU, CA, (KISSINGER, HENRY A), (REUTER), (GUNES, TURAN)
To: ANKARA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005